ABSTRACT

An authoring tool has a graphical user interface enabling interactive authoring of a multimedia presentation including temporal and nontemporal media. The graphical user interface enables specification of the temporal and spatial relationships among the media and playback of the presentation with the specified temporal and spatial relationships. The spatial and temporal relationships among the media may be changed independently of each other. The presentation may be viewed interactively under the control of the author during the authoring process without encoding the audio and video data into a streaming media data file for combination with the other media, simulating behavior of a browser that would receive a streaming media data file. The multimedia presentation may include elements that initiate playback of the presentation from a specified point in time. After authoring of the presentation is completed, the authoring tool assists in encoding and transferring the presentation for distribution. Information about the distribution format and location may be stored as user-defined profiles. Communication with the distribution location may be tested and presentation and the distribution information may be audited prior to encoding and transfer to reduce errors. A presentation is encoded according to the defined temporal and spatial relationships and the distribution format and location information to produce and encoded presentation. The encoded presentation and any supporting media data are transferred to the distribution location, such as a server. A streaming media server may be used for streaming media, whereas other data may be stored on a conventional data server. Accounts may be provided for a streaming media server for authors to publish their presentations. The authoring tool may be associated with a service that uses the streaming media server. Such streaming media servers also may be a source of stock footage for use by authors.